

Analysis of the Aesthetic Characteristics of the Cloud Shoulder Pattern in the Qing Dynasty

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Abstract: Yunjian is a patterned accessory in traditional Chinese clothing, used on the shoulders and collars. It originated in the Qin and Han dynasties and flourished in the Ming and Qing dynasties. In the Qing dynasty, it removed the mysterious cloak of royal power and nobility and spread to the people, becoming an accessory in ordinary folk clothing. Because it combines the expectations of the working people for a better life, the patterns on Yunjian have also gained richer cultural connotations. These cultural connotations carry a strong Chinese aesthetic taste. During the Qing Dynasty, craftsmen applied their design concepts through balanced composition, color contrast, and techniques such as pasting, embroidery, and embellishment to cloud shoulders, presenting a rich visual effect. Yunjian contain a wealth of artistic value that can be explored. This article will study the patterns of Yunjian from the perspective of Qing Dynasty aesthetics.

Keywords: Qing Dynasty; Yunjian; Patterns; Aesthetics Research.

1. The Concept of Yunjian

Yunjian is a traditional decorative fabric for women's clothing in ancient China, similar to shawls. In terms of clothing expression, it is mainly draped around the front, back, and left and right sides of the shoulder, often using patterns such as cloud patterns and auspicious patterns to express its decorative effect. It is carefully crafted through colorful embroidery techniques, and is called "Yunjian" because it is layered like clouds and clouds on the body.

The initial function of the Yunjian was to protect the collar from wear and keep it clean, but it later evolved into a decorative function. Yunjian, also known as shawl, has the same function as Xiapei. It is a practical and decorative clothing used for the shoulder area. It first focuses on practicality and then develops towards decoration. It can be used as a collar in daily life, or as an important decorative element for attending occasions or ceremonial clothing, and can play a role in formal beautification. With the changing times, they are also undergoing changes, and their forms and names vary in different eras. Yunjian inherits the past advantages of shawl and Xiapei, and has unique development. With the development of social modernization and changes in people's lifestyles, the form of cloud shoulders has gradually disappeared from people's lives. Its figure is more often seen in traditional opera, film and television works, and women's formal attire during weddings.

2. The Origin and Development of Yunjian

The origin of Yunshou, like Xiapei, can be traced back to the Qin Dynasty. In terms of clothing expression, Yunshou, Xiapei, and the Bijia of the Qing Dynasty can be said to be of the same origin. Pizi and shawl are the predecessors of Yunshou, and according to historical records, they can be traced back to the Qin Dynasty. Peizi and Yunshou belong to the same category of shoulder accessories, with similar shapes but different specifics.

In the bronze artifacts and murals left over from the Han Dynasty, there are depictions of women, among which

clothing with shawl like characteristics can be seen. Not many women in the Sui and Tang dynasties wore shawls, which could only be seen on dance prostitutes at that time. At this time, shawls had new changes compared to previous generations: firstly, the material of the shawl was more rigid, with both ends upturned. Secondly, it has become an independent form that does not fully conform to the movements of the body and deforms. Thirdly, at this point, the structure of the cloud shoulder becomes clearer, and the edge shape has undergone curved changes, resembling a cirrus cloud. During the Five Dynasties period, there were still many dancers and musicians wearing shawls. The costumes of these musicians are not significantly different from the Tang Dynasty style. In the clothing classification of aristocratic women in the Jin Dynasty, the cloud shoulder was used by destined women and could not be embroidered with dragon patterns, sun and moon. The Yuan Dynasty was an important period for the development of Yunjian. The Yuan Dynasty established Yunjian as a common name for this type of clothing and accessories, and established the shape of Yunjian as "four hanging Yunjian". At that time, Yunjian could be worn by both men and women, and were mostly worn by guards. Women were mostly dancers, and when dancers wore cloud shoulders to dance, the Yunjian on their shoulders were as light and graceful as clouds, hence the name Yunjian. During the Ming Dynasty, Yunjian were designated as accessories for women's formal attire, which continued the "four hanging Yunjian" of the Yuan Dynasty in its overall form, but also began to develop new styles. The Ming and Qing dynasties were the pinnacle of the development of Yunjian. With mature technology, the styles of Yunjian continued to increase and become more complex. The target audience was no longer confined to women, but became clothing and accessories that could be worn by men, women, and children of all ages.

3. The Structural Characteristics of Yunjian

The overall shape of the Yunjian is symmetrical, using either central or peripheral symmetry techniques. The use of

symmetrical and balanced formal beauty principles can bring people a sense of visual balance, giving them a sense of stability and harmony. The overall shape of the Yunjian also has typical Chinese structural features. From a flat perspective, the Yunjian is round on the inside and square on the outside, draped around the shoulder, symbolizing the unity of heaven and earth. From a three-dimensional perspective, the Yunjian is draped over the shoulder, and the patterns and hanging tassels on the Yunjian cover the human body, demonstrating the profound connotation of "unity between heaven and humanity." In addition, some of the layout of Yunjian is also an abstract representation of nature, such as the rice shaped structure with the neck as the center and symmetrical all around, symbolizing the four seasons and eight seasons.

Yunjian come in various shapes, with the most classic being the Four Harmony Ruyi style and the Willow Leaf style. The Four Harmony Ruyi style is the earliest popular style that emerged, with the collar as the center and spreading outwards. Ruyi shaped embroidery pieces can be matched with each other, presenting a similar diamond and square shape formed by the four directions closing together, corresponding to the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter, and symbolizing peace and harmony in the four directions of east, west, north, south, and north, reflecting the mutual tolerance and harmony of all things. The design of the Four Harmony Ruyi style first appeared in the Han Dynasty and was also used in clothing. Later, the Four Harmony Ruyi patterns on objects all originated from clothing.

The willow leaf style evolved from the basic style by people later on. The basic shape imitates the shape of natural plant leaves, with a single leaf shape similar to the willow leaf shape. It is a circular Yunjian symbolized by the number "six", with the collar as the center, emitting in all directions, and the flat outer contour forming a circular shape. This type of Yunjian generally has a large number of cloth pieces, with small individual cloth pieces. The willow leaf Yunjian is composed of these small cloth pieces arranged and combined in layers. In the early stage, the willow leaf Yunjian had small leaves, which were composed of a large number, but gradually developed into large leaves in the later stage. The number of willow leaf Yunjian is only even and not singular, with the auspicious meaning of "Six Six Great Shuns". The maximum number of willow leaf Yunjian is 66.

Yunjian are divided into four categories based on their form and hierarchy: single piece, stacked, connected, and hybrid. Various shapes of Yunjian give people different visual effects. The single piece Yunjian is simple and elegant, while the layered Yunjian forms a certain sense of rhythm and rhythmic beauty. The connected Yunjian brings unexpected and dynamic beauty, while the mixed Yunjian shows a more magnificent and grand feeling.

The single piece style is the prototype of all Yunjian styles, and the "Four Harmony Ruyi Style" is the earliest and most classic style that appeared. It is cut from a whole piece of fabric, without any embellishments or overlaps, and is the simplest and most basic style. The four Ruyi Cloud Embroidery pieces adopt a completely symmetrical structure. In order to facilitate the wearing and removal of the Yunjian, one piece will be designed to be divided into two symmetrical halves.

The typical style of the stacked Yunjian is the Four Harmony Ruyi style. The stacked Yunjian is usually arranged in a staggered and orderly manner, with the upper piece length

being smaller than the lower piece length, from small to large. The stacking method emphasizes balance and symmetry, with a gradient order. At least two layers, and at most three or four layers, it has a more layered feel compared to a single piece Yunjian.

The connected Yunjian is composed of multiple embroidered pieces connected in series, with the meaning of continuity and continuity. It is loved by folk handicrafts and accounts for a large proportion of the existing physical quantity of Yunjian. The connected Yunjian utilizes deconstruction and reassembly techniques to create a hollowed out visual effect. Decompose the entire Ruyi cloud so that there are gaps between the clouds that can be filled with other forms of patterns, while achieving the goal of reducing the excess, making the Yunjian more in line with the human body, making it easier to move, and better performing its functionality. From an aesthetic perspective, the structure is not limited to the interpretation of Ruyi cloud patterns, and various artistic symbols or symbolic patterns can be used.

The hybrid style is more casual in combination, and can be a combination of three Yunjian forms: single piece, stacked, and connected. In terms of structure, it follows the requirements of balanced and symmetrical layout, but compared with the previous three combination forms, it has more diverse performance and more free composition, integrating various decorative patterns into one. This also requires more attention to materials, working hours, and decoration.

4. The Pattern Characteristics of Cloud Shoulders

The patterns of Yunjian are extremely rich, with a wide range of themes, mainly including plants, animals, characters, geometric objects and texts, combinations, etc. They often use shapes to express good wishes such as auspiciousness, complete happiness, abundant clothing and food, more children and grandchildren, promotion and wealth, etc. They have rich symbolic significance and profound folk connotations. The same Yunjian theme can be presented in a single category or both. In the physical objects of Yunjian, the proportion of combination patterns is relatively large, such as plants and plants, plants and people, people and animals, animals and plants, as well as various combination forms such as plants, animals and symbols. Pattern images are usually artistic treatments that organize, summarize, and transform objective objects, fully expressing the beautiful meaning of Yunjian. The composition focuses on symmetrical structures, pursuing overall, complete, and full-bodied aesthetics, while also reflecting a unified and varied form in multiple levels.

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Symbolic patterns use specific patterns to represent the characteristics of their shape, color, function, etc., symbolizing beautiful wishes and pointing to specific meanings. Fortune, wealth, longevity, and happiness are the foundation of all auspicious patterns, and the five themes deeply reflect the highest aspirations of China's agricultural economy. The images of peaches, pomegranates, and bergamot deeply demonstrate the Chinese people's pursuit of family, the traditional concept of shining stars, a long life of a hundred years, and a family full of children and grandchildren.

The use of plant, vegetable, and animal patterns in transliteration patterns is the most common among all Yunjian patterns. The pattern combines the names of things into homophones and homophones to convey blessings and express good luck. "Guadie" comes from "Shi Da Ya Mian", symbolizing the prosperity and continuity of future generations. The butterfly image is most likely to appear in this pattern. Using the pattern of pumpkin and butterfly combination, take the melon and butterfly, which sound the same as the melon and butterfly. Fruits and melons are adorned with butterflies, visually enriching the overall effect of Yunjian patterns. On the spiritual level, crops, animals and plants are connected with the value of life and life, making it difficult for small-scale farming economy to live. I hope the family prospers, the population prospers, and there is no end to life.

Scene based patterns. Scene based patterns are a depiction of real life, and the most direct form of expression among the four categories. They represent the common image features of characters, animals and plants, as well as life and natural scenes, in the Yunjian pattern, giving the theme a personified personality. Usually, characters are the main focus, with scenery as a supplement. Scenery is picturesque, courtyard scenery, small bridges and flowing houses, presenting the beautiful scenery of Jiangnan. In this artistic conception, there are characters chatting, strolling, admiring flowers, and admiring scenery, expressing the emotional demands of peace, ease of life, pursuit of happiness, and longing for the future.

Textual patterns. Textual patterns mainly refer to Chinese characters, which in themselves are a type of pattern and belong to a unique decorative technique in auspicious patterns. Traditional Chinese characters are placed in patterns as hymns or admonitions. As early as the Han Dynasty and the Southern and Northern Dynasties, Chinese characters were used in clothing and textiles. Inscriptions were most common during this period, and people liked to use words such as blessings, longevity, happiness, and good luck, interspersed among flowers and plants. In the Ming Dynasty, in addition to textiles and clothing, textual patterns were also added to jewelry and accessories. The font "Shou" should be considered the most popular among them. In the Qing Dynasty, the variant "shou" font was the most representative, intentionally transforming, combining, and deconstructing the "shou" character into a pattern. There may have been hundreds of different "shou" fonts on a piece of clothing, and this variant of "shou" character has become one of the most auspicious Chinese characters loved by everyone in the calligraphy industry.

5. The Color of Yunjian

The color use of Yunjian is very in line with the aesthetic laws of traditional Chinese culture, which has both visual effects and cultural heritage. Its characteristics cannot be described using balance and symmetry, but can be described as coordination, seeking change in coordination. Guided by the theoretical framework of the Five Elements and Five Colors theory, the color matching methods are diverse and rich, with rich and vibrant tones and high color saturation, which has a strong visual impact and presents people's psychological needs for a better life.

Based on the characteristics of the Yunjian shape, its color can be analyzed and classified into embroidery background color, pattern decoration color, and process auxiliary color. The background color of the embroidery piece refers to the fabric background color of the Yunjian, which is also the basic main color tone. The decorative color of the pattern refers to the color used for the pattern and edge decoration on the embroidery piece, and the auxiliary color of the process refers to the color used for the edge wrapping of the embroidery piece. Generally, colorless and metallic colors are used to outline the contour of the Yunjian, playing a role in connecting the background color and harmonizing the color tone. The background colors of the embroidery pieces on Yunjian are mainly blue, red, yellow, black, and white. They are decorated with bright and lively patterns and colors to form a pattern, and then coordinated with the auxiliary colors of craftsmanship to complete the overall color matching of Yunjian. The "Five Colors" represent the positive colors, which symbolize that all things in the world are generated by the Five Elements, namely gold, wood, water, fire, and earth. The five colors are the main elements, supplemented by other "intermediate colors". At the same time, the "Five Colors" should complement the overall clothing, both in contrast and overall coordination. By controlling the changes in color, purity, and brightness, a harmonious and unified visual beauty can be achieved.

Embroidery and decorative thread color matching are usually classified into two categories: contrasting color treatment and blending color treatment. The contrast color processing creates visual differences through the combination of multiple contrasting colors, which can be the color contrast between the upper and lower stripes, or through different color treatments such as inlay and spacing on the stripes, forming a strong color contrast. In color studies, red and green are complementary colors, with the maximum color contrast. Combining the synthesized intermediate colors together creates a strong contrast. Harmony color processing is a strong contrast set to ease contrast colors. By using similar colors, similar colors, the same color, similar colors, and other colors to represent the same color tone, and through different means, achieving full overall coordination, adjusting the brightness, purity, hue, and color block size of colors to achieve coordination and seek change.

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